

VOL. II, No. 2.

DEC. 1888. රු

SINGLE COPY, TEN CENTS. FIFTY CENTS PER ANNUM.

THE ORIGIN OF THE BANIO.

Chicago, Oct. 15th, 1888.

L. B. GATCOMB, Esq.,
Dear Sir — Some time ago I promised to write an article for your Journal concerning

time, the banjo played by Mr. Earl Pierce, same shop with me and was a great friend and perhaps at that time. associate of mine. Warren introduced me us to hear him play the banjo. I became in-my engagement in Chicago in October, 1888 fatuated with what I considered a wonderful I became acquainted with Mr. Charles L. played thrilled me with delight. It was the One evening we were sitting in a cafe, much watched him closely and took the first opportunity to examine its construction. The dimensions I simply guessed at, being ashamed to ask him for them outright. I secretly definited to make one for myself which I accomplished before Earl's departure. It was ceeded as follows:—

| Conversation the origin of the particle provided in the provided me with a poem, with all de bussin the recital of which convinced me that he knew the origin of that much admired instructions and included in the provided me with a poem, with all de bussin the recital of which convinced me that he knew the origin of that much admired instructions. After setting our glasses down he provided in the provided me with a poem, with all de bussin the recital of which convinced me that he knew the origin of that much admired instructions. After setting our glasses down he provided me with a poem, with all de bussin the recital of which convinced me that he knew the origin of that much admired instructions. After setting our glasses down he provided me with a poem, with all de bussin the recital of which convinced me that he knew the origin of that much admired instructions. After setting our glasses down he provided me with a poem, with all de bussin the recital of which convinced me that he knew the origin of that much admired instructions. After setting our glasses down he provided me with a poem, with all de bussin the recital of which convinced me that he with all de bussin the recital of which convinced me that he will be used to be a poem of the recital of which convinced me with a poem, with all de bussin the recital of which convinced me with a poem, with all de bussin the recital of which convinced me with a poem, with all de bussin the recital of which convinced me with a poem, with all de bussin the recital of which convinced me with a poem, with all de bussin the recital of which convinced me with a poem, with all de bussin the recital of which convinced me with a poem, with all de bussin the recital of which convinced me with a poem deed, I thought it was perfect. I was totally unacquainted with the strings and did not Go 'way fiddle. Folks is tired of hearin' you know what to get, but finally strung it up in a know what to get, but finally strung it up in a manner which I thought would do. I proudly showed it to Earl, who took it in his hands and closely examined it. Imagine my chagrin 'Bout de 'Possum's Tail' she's gwine ter lecture. and clesely examined it. Imagine my chagrin when he smilingly said: "Are you left handed?" I told him I was not. He said: "The banjo is well made and I think fair toned, but you have the thumb string on the wrong side of the neck." My mortification was very great when I saw the error. He told me to make another neck and that the rest was all For Noah took de Picayune and read de right. Then he showed me his and explained to me what strings to get for it, and turning to a piano he taught me in a short time how And lowed he's gwine to build a boat to beat the to tune by that.

I made another neck, but he had gone to New York before its completion.

I soon learned to play a tune but it was of "Beastes".

some time before I heard another banjo Of all the shows a traveling he beat 'em all played and the player was Tom Briggs, who was then filling an engagement in Providence. Not being acquainted with him, I went every the origin of the Banjo.

Early in the forties I heard, for the first night to hear him and watched his right hand very close. I obtained the motion of his the famous comedian who was then connected thumb and finger and became familiar with with E. P. Christy's Minstrels in New York the sound of the notes which were firmly City. It happened that Mr. Pierce came to fixed in my memory. I practiced faithfully visit his brother, Warren Pierce in Providence, night and day and soon became quite profic-R. I., (my native place) who worked in the lient, in fact, as good as any in the business,

I do not know who the first man was to to his brother Earl, who one evening invited introduce the banjo to the public, but during instrument, and the several pieces that he Harris, an actor, a leading man with Lotta. first time I had ever seen a banjo, and I frequented by professionals, and during our And de Lion got his dander up a like to break watched him closely and took the first oppor-conversation the origin of the banjo was dispersionals. De "serpints" hissed, de "Painters" velled and was dispersional to the origin of the banjo was di

Ladies listen. Bout de hair what isn't dar, and why de hair is missing.

II.

"Dar's gwine ter be an overflow" said Noah looking solemn. River Colun; And so he sot his hands to work a cleaning steamer "Natchez."

And Noah had done cotched a lot of every kind to pieces. He had a Morgan bolt and several head of Jersey cattle And drove 'em board de ark as soon's he heard de thunder rattle.

IV.

other fall of rain, it come so awful heavy,
De river riz immediately and busted through de Levee. De people all was drownded out 'cept Noah and de critters. And de men he hired to work de boat and de one to mix de bitters.

De ark she kept a sailin', and a sailin', and De "serpints" hissed, de "Painters" yelled and what

Now Ham, de only nigger dat was runnin in de packet. Got lonesome in de barber shop and couldn't stand de racket.

And so for to amuse himself he steamed some wood and bent it. And soon he had a banjo made, De fust dat was invented.

VII.

He wet some leather, stretched it on, made de bridge and screws and apron
And fitted in a proper neck, 'twas very long
and tapering. Heook some tin and twisted him a thimble for to ring it, And den de mighty question riz, how was he gwine to string it?

[CONTINUED ON SECOND PAGE.]

GATCOMB'S

BANJO & GUITAR GAZETTE.

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L. B. GATCOMB & CO.,

No. 30 Hanover St., Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

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Advertisements under the heading "New Music," one insertion. lines, 50 cents; additional lines 12 1-2 cents per line.

Press of G. M. Tuck, Boston.

VIII.

Well, de Possum had as fine a tail as dis dat I'm a singin;
De hair so long and thick and strong, just fit

for banjo stringin.

Dat nigger shaved 'em off as short as wash day

dinner graces. And sorted of 'em by de size from little E's to basses.

He strung her, tuned her, struck a jig, 'twas "Never mind de weather." She sound like forty 'leven bands a playin all together.

Some went to pattin, some to dancin, Old Noah called de figgers And Ham jest sot and knocked de "chune" de happiest of niggers.

Now since dat time, (it's powerful strange,) dars not de slightest showin Of any hair upon de Possum's tail a growing.

And curious too, dat nigger's ways, his people never lost 'em,
For where you find de nigger, dars de
Banjo and de Possum.

With best wishes and kind regards, I remain yours sincerely, GEORGE H. COES.

PROGRESS.

MR. EDITOR:

the banjo craze started, some two years or the better grades are being sold very extenmore ago, that it was a mush-room growth; sively and even fabulous prices are being paid; but their vaperings were, like mist before a and the little *Gems* of beauty are placed in the took to "picking on de ole banjo," chiefly summer sun: the mush-room has grown into the most conspicuous places, instead of being for his own amusement at first. When he magnificent proportions, and its beauty and relegated to some hiding place, for fear of sweetness is tempting the epicures of every being ostracised by your fashionable friend,

The London Truth says: "I can well imag-and Minstrel instrument. ine the feelings of the New Orleans darkey, as he existed before the war, if he could only to retract his edict against the banjo, or he visit a London drawing room in full season, will become a relic to be deposited in the and hear the young scions of aristocracy Smithsonian Institute among the fossils and the Princess and their daughters."

I am informed by those who ought to Editor Banje & Guitar Gazette: know, that the Prince of Wales, like his relative, the Czar of Prussia, is no mean performer Mr. Harbaugh had an interesting article on on the Banjo; that he can, after returning the first page. Permit me to say, that Byron from the opera, pick out the tunes on the banjo with astonishing facility. Mr. Gladstone himself, is said to favor the instrument, which also solaces the few intervals of leisure name was Grove and was written Grose.' in which other brain-workers are able to indulge."

Here in Washington, I am told, the first lady in the land, the present incumbent of the White House, is learning to play; Sena-tor Eustis' daughter is a very fine performer several times appear as "Joe Swerney", but I on the banjo, and I could mention many more incline to lay it to the printer, for any man among the elite of Washington who are proud of their ability to manipulate the banjo is acquainted with "Old Joe."

strings. The members of the Chinese Legation are laying aside their quaint little moon guitars and they show a decided proficiency in the away, but write from memory. finger manipulation, and I suppose we will be exporting some banjos to China, to aid some mine in 1850, and, as he only played in what Chinese concerts very soon, as I do not think is now technically called "banjo style", (i. e. there will be a first-class concert any where with thumb and first finger; "stroke" may be upon our Globe, that will be complete without a more correct term,) he passed out of the

a banio. The papers of every city are now and then interspersing through their news columns, extracts and talks of prominent players; the fret; hence the compass of the instrument people at large are getting a better understanding of the capabilities of the instrument. And during my sojourn in the plains we had a performer of the banjo with us, and during the war of 1861-65, was an attache of when in the evening, after the days' work was some Confederate General, which one I never completed and the tin plates washed and could learn. At the first charge on Petersand the familiar airs played, that brought exchange, I thought of "Old Joe Sweeney" instrument that could keep those memories with certain generals, for, like Stonewall Jack-

Another evidence of its growing popularity and its intention to become a fixture in the musical family, is that the old time \$10 and It was predicted by the wise acres, when \$12 instruments are not in such demand, but for evincing a taste for that detested Negro

It is now in order for that Yale professor twanging the once dended 'plantation' in-petrified mummies of the ancients; and strument in the ears of damsels of high music will have to leave out the notes and ed to consider the cares of state, and giving less favored instrument to deride and vent his a boudoir performance on the banjo, before spleen on.

E. G. HARBAUGH,

Washington, D. C.

In your issue for September and October, cites the case of a man who died for his country, and had his name spelled wrong in the Gazette. I forget the verse, but he says "His Think of it! Fame, with a big F, should hand down a man's name as he spells it or his judividuality is lost.

I cannot say whether it was Mr. Harbaugh

Some years before there were any "Nigger Minstrels", Sweeney came North with a circus and played his banjo in the ring. This was and taking up our silvered tongued banjos; about 1845. I have the correct dates laid

profession as the banjo improved in compass. Now this last phrase needs explanation. In Sweeney's time no player went below the fifth was limited more than at present.

placed in the mess-chest, the old Banjo burg, June 16, 1864, I was captured and, brought out of its resting place, and tuned, after working all my Northern friends for an back the memories of the old home and in- and tried to get his address. By the process mates, we could almost revere the hand and of elimination, I decided that he was not so fresh and green. And even poor Lo who son, they had no music in their souls. I was often a part of the audience, would show more than ordinary interest, and the stolid which used to make my hair stand on end. countenance would lighten up with pleasure; and he would give vent to the gutteral grunt of satisfaction when some part of the music would reach a weak spot.

William Bed to make my had stand on child and the stand of the music can give me the address of "Old Joe Sweeney," I will go down into "Ole Virginny" to see him.

Fred. Mather.

THRUM-TE-TUM TUM.

Mr. John Davis, of this city, may be called the pioneer of banjo-playing in Western Massachusetts. It is fifteen years or more since for his own amusement at first. When he began there were not more than two or three persons in the city who played the banjo at all, and those were colored men. He used to play occasionally at entertainments, and as there was a young lady who played with him, the thing was quite a novelty, and proved a taking feature.

"I used to be dreadfully ashamed of it, though," says Mr. Davis. "The banjo was considered a low kind of instrument, only fit for drumming plantation jigs, and when I had estate; and the most exalted males in this realm throwing aside those troubles which the must be a broken one, for he cannot lean on to take it out of doors I covered it up as well must be a broken one, for he cannot lean on the leaf and slipped along the back streets. inhabitants of the greater republics are pleas-that with safety, unless he can resurrect some as I could, and slipped along the back streets where I would be the least seen. I had some pupils-young fellows who wanted to learn to play a few tunes by ear-but banjo-playing was nothing like the study and science it is from 45 to 60 pupils, and as they generally

It was about seven years ago that the banjo busy. craze struck New York, and all at once the field at about the same time. Mr. Davis' first and there are two in Hartford. lady pupil was a prominent society girl, and she at once set the style to learn the banjo. From that time he had his hands full. He found it necessary to give up his other employment and devote himself wholly to the banio.

Formerly there was no music written for the banjo, and banjoists had to create and perfect the science for themselves. Now the new music comes arranged for the banjo as well as piano, and there is an unlimited assort-

ment from which to select.

So far from being a transient whim of fashion, banjo-playing seems to increase in popularity. Few of the students here study to become professionals or teachers, the fashion prevailing chiefly among the scions of wealthy families, who play chiefly for the entertainthemselves to the banjo is about equally divided. Lately a great many children, both boys and girls, are beginning to play, and they prove, as a rule, apter and quicker pupils than adults.

to practice of the scales, but soon simple tunes are alternated with the exercises, to scriptive circular. Address make the study more interesting. In three months a tolerably apt pupil is able to play with a fair degree of correctness, and from that time can steadily improve and perfect Dodworth's himself with practice. Quick, lively tunes, schottisches and polkas, are first given. Of course, some classes of music are not adapted to the banio.

bilities of the banjo every day," Mr. Davis says. "Sometimes I get a new idea from a Arranged by G. L. Lansing. pupil, and when I do I don't hesitate to tell him so. I am studying the instrument con-stantly, and I know that I have a good deal more to learn yet.'

It is remarkable what a popular feature a banjo duet or quartet is, at almost any kind of entertainment. Good banjo-playing is sure to meet with rounds of applause when the most scientific execution on other instru-

ments falls flat.

A player needs to buy a good instrument. It is a mistake to suppose that any kind of a banjo will do to begin with. Nothing so surely discourages a learner as a poor instrument. The prices of banjos vary according to their tone and make. They range from \$5 up to \$100, and some of the higher priced are very elaborately decorated and finished. A handsome and fine-toned "professional" instrument can be obtained for \$40. The low-priced banjos are spoken of as "store tubs" by teachers. Mr. Davis' concert banjo Eks's Schottische, Duett shines like the gilded dome of the Hub.

Mr. Davis' largest classes are in this city, and he has a number of pupils in Holyoke and other towns. He teaches on an average

take lessons separately, he is kept extremely

There are two or three others in the city banjo rose to the top notch of fashion, for who devote part of their time to teaching the ladies as well as men. The rage hit Spring-banjo. Worcester has one expert teacher,

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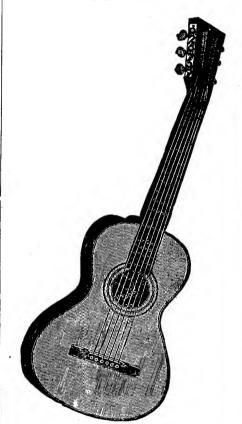
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Perhaps no City in the Union can boast of Among its many votaries is the gentleman ly hope that he will have a speedy recovery. whose portrait is above printed.

He is a native of the Granite State, having been born in Lake Village, N. H., June 23, 1852, where he resideded until the age of ten years, when he moved to Boston, which has

been his home ever since.

with Mr. G. L. Lansing in 1885, and made I receive." such rapid progress that by the advise of nis This latter was rendered necessary by the agent for Gatcomb's celebrated banjos. strain which Messrs. Shattuck and Babb encountered in their endeavors to handle all the pupils which flock to this place.

all the qualfications which are necessary in a

has acquired.



The Manchester Banjo, Guitar and Mandolin Club has been organized as follows:sier, Banjo and Vocalist.

press the hope that they will have much sucess. proper pitch.

Edward Walsh writing from Quebec, says: "Your Gazette is grand. It is steadily improving and is worth four times the price you ask for it." The Gazette is increasing in cirpassing Review," has just been published for culation wonderfully. No banjoist can afford the banjo by D. W. Reeves, of Providence, to be without it.

Lansing, we have a lettar from William Sulli-composed by H. B. Dodworth, (the leader of van, of Montreal, Can., wherein he says that Dodworth's celebrated New York band) espeit is grand, and also expresses his great pleas-cially for concerts, and has been jealously ure with the Mill Dam Galop, by A. A. Babb. guarded by him ever since. It created such He also saps that he expects to make a great a favorable impression wherever played that hit with both of them.

We notice with much pleasure, the flatter-banjo form. ing notice which the Bangor Daily Commercial of Sept. 29th, gives to the concert given by Miss Helen A. Friend in Fairfield, Me. It says that the Dobson Banjo and Guitar Or- we had the pleasure of calling on Mr. Otto chestra, composed of 12 of the leading young people of the village furnished music, both surprising and enjoyable. While conpraise is unstinted.

gentleman should guarantee to be first-class. His address will be found in the Teachers' column.

more banjo talent than Boston. The instru- informing us of the severe illness of Mr. E. day the day for their work there, and F, W. ment is very popular and attracts enthusiastic M. Hall. He has congestion of the blood Peabody's music store their headquarters. audiences whenever played in concert. vessels at the base of the brain. We sincere-

ant letter from Cleveland, Ohio, brimfull of sciencious teaching, a large number of young happy prognostications for the coming winter. ladies and gentlemen of that city have be-She reports great enthusiasm among Cleve-come quite proficient. Mr. Harris teaches at land banjoists. Concerning the Gazette she F. W. Peabody's music store on Fridays. He commenced the study of the banjo says: "I like it better than any musical paper

tutor he commenced teaching about one Folks at Home" and a duett with Mr. Fred-year ago with great success. He divides his erick Hashagen, Shattuck's Invincible Guard time between his studio at the South End and the establishment of L. B. Gatcomb & Co. Mo., with great success. Mr. Bertholdt is which was placed with and which was placed with a success.

Mr. Shattuck, of the Ideal Club, has lately Past," or the Passing Review, written by Dodpurchased of Thompson & Odel a Washburn worth, the leader of the celebrated New York Of a kind and genial nature and possessing the qualifications which are necessary in a manufacturers. Messrs. T. & O. are sole Providence, R. I. (whose advertisement can be added to the control of the part of the control of the part o good instructor and a hard worker, he is en- New England agents. The Ideal Club use the be found in this issue), and is very pretty and titled to the share of public esteem which he Washburn Mandolins and Guitars exclusively. effective.

Messrs. Goldby & Shepard, of Paterson, N. J., publish a series of studies for the banjo about 25, which, together with the other fine which are highly endorsed. See their advertisement on another page.

fret by pressing the string down on the finger- mense advance sale, and our advice is, to any B. A. Bloomey, Banjeaurine and Mandolin; board. The end of the string which is largest one contemplating purchasing tickets, get W. E. Burbank, Banjeaurine and Mandolin; will be flat of the octave, while the small end them now, or there will be none left. W. H. Sullivan, Guitar and Vocalist; F. E. will be sharp. To remedy this, TIE the Straw, Guitar and Harmonica; W. M. Tes-KNOT at the SMALL END of the string. Mr. Geo. F. Palmer, one of Boston's finest As the strain at the end of the string which is banjo makers. The addition of Mr. Palmer We wish to acknowledge the receipt of an attached to the peg is the greatest, it will to our already large corps of finished workelegant photograph of this club, and to ex-thereby even out as it is brought up to its men, makes our facilities for turning out high

The great success of last season with the R. I. It is, without doubt, one of the most effective pieces ever written for the instru-Concerning the Darkies' Patrol, by G. L. ment, and is entirely fresh and new. It was it was judged the proper time to put it in

Banjo solo, 40 cents; two banjos, 50 cents. For sale by L. B. Gatcomb & Co.

While in Philadelphia a short time since, cerning the artistic efforts of Miss Friend its ber of compositions shown us we conclude that he makes the most of his time.

Just out. It will make a sensation—the Guitar studies, which the reputation of this great Banjo Song and Chorus, "Mrs. Diddemus' Party," as sung all over the world by Schoolcraft and Coes. Every banjoist wants it.
Mr. and Mrs. B. E. Shattuck are instruct-

ing a much larger number of banjo pupils in We are in receipt of a letter from Chicago, Haverhill than last season. They make Fri-

Mr. H. W. Harris, of the Ideal Club, has a large class of Mandolin and Guitar pupils in Mrs. M. Rogers has written us a very pleas- Haverhill, and through his patient and con-

The great Banjo Concert to be given by the Boston Ideal Club at Tremont Temple, Bos-Mr. C. C. Bertholdt, played Lansing's "Old ton, on Tuesday evening, Dec. 11, 1888, promises to eclipse the one given a year ago by this Club. There will be an orchestra of season by the Ideal Club, viz.: "The March

There will also be a Mandolin orchestra of portant epoch in the banjo world. Such a concert is of the greatest benefit and importance to the banjo. It keeps alive the interest To prove that a string is false. Make the in the instrument, and stimulates the young 12th harmonic, then the octave at the same player to greater efforts. There is an im-

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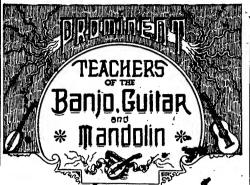
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